



ASSISTANCE TO MOTORISTS

FC No.: 1033

Date: 01-29-18

If a provision of a regulation, departmental directive, or rule conflicts with a provision of the contract, the contract prevails except where the contract provision conflicts with State law or the Police Collective Bargaining Law. (FOP Contract, Article 61)

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I. Policy

It is the policy of the department to provide a safe environment for all individuals using the roads within Montgomery County. Officers observing a motorist in need of emergency assistance will stop and determine the nature of the emergency and will take appropriate action to provide reasonable assistance. This will include providing a communications link to needed emergency services and ensuring that the motorist is in a position which does not present an undue hazard to the motorist's safety or to other individuals using the roadway.

II. Procedures for Assisting Stranded Motorists

- A. Upon observing a motorist or pedestrian who is in obvious need of assistance, the officer will, while operating a department vehicle:
 - 1. Stop and position the vehicle to afford the best protection to the citizen, the officer, and other persons using the roadway.
 - 2. Determine the nature of the emergency.
 - 3. Offer appropriate assistance.
- B. The assistance offered may consist of:
 - 1. A request, via ECC, for a tow truck from the authorized tow list (refer to FC 1060, "Towing of Motor Vehicles").
 - 2. A request, via ECC, for a tow truck from a company that the motorist specifies (refer to FC 1060).
 - 3. Minor assistance with *vehicle* repairs, at the officer's option.
 - 4. Use of the *push* bumper, with the agreement of the motorist, to push the disabled vehicle to a safe location (refer to FC 421, "Operation of Police Vehicles").
 - 5. A request that the district station call a third party to come to the location to assist the motorist.
 - 6. Providing the motorist a ride to a reasonably close service facility or telephone, so that they may secure their own services.
 - 7. Any other reasonable service which would meet the needs of the motorist.

C. Vehicles in Unsafe Locations

If the disabled vehicle is at a location which is unsafe, the officer will remain with the vehicle until it can be safely removed. In certain circumstances, due to the danger presented by the vehicle's continued presence on the roadway, officers may have to arrange for its removal, regardless of the wishes of the owner. Should the vehicle be in a place which affords the occupants relative safety, and no other unusual circumstances exist which threaten the safety or well being of the occupants, the officer may leave after arranging for emergency service assistance. If appropriate, the officer *may assist the motorist by setting up road flares* for safety and visibility until the assistance arrives.

- D. After the appropriate assistance has been rendered, the officer will advise ECC of the situation. ECC will make a note of the action taken, should any further calls be received.

E. Officers Unable to Stop

In the case where the officer is unable to stop for the motorist due to heavy or dangerous traffic conditions (e.g., I-495, I-270) or where a condition exists which would make stopping impractical (e.g., prisoner in transport or priority call), the procedure is as follows:

1. Advise ECC of the location and vehicle description.
2. Request that another county unit, Maryland State Police in the case of the Interstate Highway System or *MDTA Police in the case of the Intercounty Connector*, be notified to respond.

III. Medical Emergencies

Should an officer come upon a motorist experiencing a medical emergency, the officer will request the assistance of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS), render first aid as appropriate, and attempt to stabilize the situation until rescue personnel arrive.

IV. Vehicle Fires and Hazardous Materials Response

A. Officer Responsibilities

Upon arrival at a vehicle fire or hazardous material spill, officers will:

1. Immediately notify ECC of the need for MCFRS and provide, at a minimum, the:
 - a. Exact location
 - b. Number of persons injured
 - c. Type of injuries
 - d. Number/type of vehicles involved
 - e. Placard ID numbers on commercial vehicles
 - f. Type of fire/spill and the extent (e.g., fully involved, brake fire, 20-foot pool of gasoline, etc.)
2. Request additional units if needed and provide a safe approach route and assignment information to those units.
3. If able, effect the rescue of any persons. Ensure all individuals are in a safe location at least 100 feet from the vehicle fire or upwind of any spill. Do not approach, walk through, or touch any spilled fluid (including fluid on persons).
4. Isolate and protect the scene, to include keeping police vehicles clear of the immediate area to allow fire and rescue vehicles clear and free access to the scene.
5. Utilize a fire extinguisher to extinguish small fires.
6. Do not utilize road flares without approval of MCFRS Incident Commander.
7. Request ECC advise the Traffic Management Center (TMC) of any prolonged road/lane closures. TMC can coordinate the response of the various transportation *agency resources* and arrange for alternate routes, media notification, barricades, and signage if needed. After the incident, when the road/lane is opened, notify TMC.

- B. Incident Command
MCFRS will assume incident command upon arrival until the fire/spill threat is eliminated. The senior ranking officer will coordinate requests from the MCFRS Incident Commander.

- C. For large hazardous material spills, refer to FC 901, "Disaster and Public Emergency Response."

- D. Reporting Requirements
A vehicle fire in which the vehicle cannot be driven from the scene does not require a collision investigation unless it meets at least one other requirement for conducting an investigation (refer to FC 1021, "Motor Vehicle Collisions").

V. Vehicle Lockouts

- A. Citizen Safety Risks
ECC will dispatch a patrol unit to a citizen locked out of a vehicle when:
1. The vehicle is located in a remote area that poses a safety risk.
 2. The report is received at such a late hour that it poses a safety risk.
 3. A young child is locked in the vehicle. MCFRS will also be notified.
 4. Any circumstance which presents a safety risk or where a hazardous situation exists.

- B. No Citizen Safety Risks
In situations that do not present a safety risk to the citizen, ECC will advise the caller to contact a tow or locksmith service to assist them in unlocking their vehicle. The caller will be advised the police lack the proper tools to unlock vehicle doors.

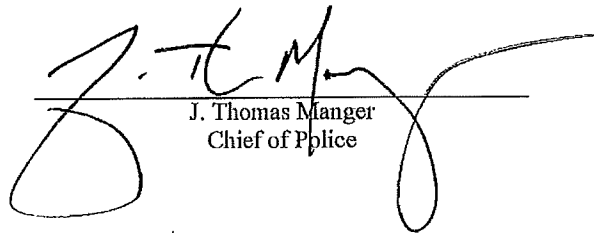
- C. Vehicles with Side Impact Airbags
Officers will not attempt to use a "Slim Jim" type tool to open any car door that is protected by a side impact airbag due to the potential for injury to the officer. The officer should advise the vehicle owner to contact a locksmith for this assistance and advise the owner of the potential for injury. If this is a situation where it is critical that entry be made into the vehicle, the officer may need to effect forcible entry. Whenever possible, the officer will wait for MCFRS to make forcible entries.

VI. CALEA Standards: 41.2.4, 61.2.2-e, 61.3.2, 61.4.1, 61.4.2

VII. Proponent Unit: Traffic Division

VIII. Cancellation

This directive cancels Function Code 1033, effective date *08-16-04*.



J. Thomas Manger
Chief of Police

